



APPOINTMENTS OF THE NEW MEMBERS OF THE LAVALLA200> INITIATIVE

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITIES FOR A NEW BEGINNING

On 5th July, the Superior General, Br. Ernesto Sanchez, announced the appointments of the third group of candidates of the Lavalla200> program, International Communities for a New Beginning, whose preparation period ran from 5th May to 7th July.

This announcement followed a lengthy period of preparation and discernment in line with the vision of the International Communities for a New Beginning: aspiring to be a significant present among children and young people in situations of vulnerability; to create a new mindset of global availability; to place a high value on and live out intercultural living and ministry; to develop a quality relational style of community life, witnessing to the Gospel, and with a strong emphasis on spirituality.

The new members were assigned as follows:

• **Lavalla200> Atlantis (South Africa):**

Juliana Maria Fontoura Galline – Province of Brazil Centro-Sul

Diogo Luis Santana Galline – Province of Brazil Centro-Sul



• **Lavalla200> Siracusa (Italy):**

Regina Biasibetti – Province of Brazil Sul-Amazônia

Rosa Schiaffino – Province of Mediterraneana

• **Lavalla200> East Harlem (United States):**

Wendel Augusto Santos Gama – Province of Brazil Centro-Sul

Br. Lazar Hirudayasamy Sebastian – Province of South Asia

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

- From Tuesday to Friday, July 17 – 20, Brothers Today and ongoing formation teams are meeting in Rome with the participation of Brothers João Carlos do Prado and Óscar Martín, General Councillors, and Tony Leon, director of the Brothers Today secretariat.
- From July 17 – 27, Br Josep Maria Soterias, general councillor, is meeting with the group that is writing the

Institute's Rule of Life, in Rome.

- From Wednesday, July 18, to Friday, July 20, Pep Buetas, co-director of the Secretariat for the Laity, will attend the first Lay Marist Assembly of the United States province, held in Long Branch, New Jersey.
- From July 20 – 30, Br Tony Leon, director of the Brothers Today secretariat, will take part in a pilgrimage for Canada Marist brothers

and laity leaders at Notre Dame de L'Hermitage, France.

- From July 22 – 28, Br Valdicer Fachi, director of Cmi, will attend a meeting with members of the Fratelli Project in Beirut, Lebanon.
- This week, from July 16 – 22, nearly 40 leaders of Marist vocational and youth ministry in Europe are gathering at the General House in Rome.

• **Lavalla200> Diocese of Holguín (Cuba):**

Br. Jorge Gaio – Province of Brazil Centro-Sul
 Silvia Margarita Pérez – Province of Santa María de los Andes
 Ricardo Antonio Miño Barreno – Province of Santa María de los Andes
 Br. Dionesio De Vera JR Acosta – Province of East Asia

• **Vietnam (District of Asia):**

Br. Dong-Ryeol (Anselmo) Kim – Province of East Asia

• **Pailin -Cambodia (District of Asia):**

Br. Pierre Joseph Rasolomanana – Province of Madagascar

Others:

- Br. Francis Peter Amoako-Attah, of the District of West Africa, will continue at Pailin (Cambodia) – District of Asia.
- Br. Jonnel Maglungsod Sisneros, of the Province of East Asia, will continue in the Lavalla200> community at Mount Druitt – Australia.Lavalla200>

• Br. Jiji Dasan, of the Province of South Asia, will continue in the Community at Talit (India), District of Asia.

• Beth Code, of the Province of Australia, will take up a volunteer role in the Three2Six Project in Johannesburg (South Africa).

It is significant to note that, for the first time, there was a De la Salle Brother present in the preparation program: Carlos Caicedo, a member of the recently established La-Salle community in Tabatinga (Brazil).

The generosity and courage of the members of the Lavalla200> initiative is a source of joy and thanks for all Marists, as a visible sign of our journeying together as a global charismatic family, building bridges alongside children and young people on the margins of life.

PHILIPPINES: MARIST ASIA PACIFIC CENTER (MAPAC)

NEW FORMATION YEAR STATED IN MARIKINA CITY

The Marist Asia Pacific Center (MAPAC) started its NEW FORMATION YEAR (2018 - 2019) on June 25, 2018. On this day, our small MAPAC community welcomed five new members. They are Brothers Anitelea Fidow from Samoa; Peng Wang from China; Rubel Nokruk from Bangladesh (the 1st Brother ever from this great country to be at MAPAC); Tabunga Etuati from Kiribati and Thuong Le Danh from Vietnam.

It was a joyful event when we welcome these Brothers in a welcoming liturgy as well as through a cultural welcome. These new group of Brothers are energetic, outgoing and are wonderful singers. Brother Guang-zhao Zhang also from China is another member of this 1st Year group. He arrived at the end of 2017. Therefore, there are six 1st Year Student Brothers.

They join the three 2nd Year Brothers who are from Vietnam (2) and the Solomon Islands. Altogether there are only nine student Brothers at MAPAC for this formation year. The formation team is composed by five members: Australia (2), Argentina (1), Papua New Guinea (1) and Samoa (1).

First activities

We have started our summer modules. Firstly, there was a module on Ecology and the Cosmics. This was carried

out up north at the mountain city of Baguio at the Maryknoll Ecological Sanctuary. There the participating Brothers learnt about the Journey of the universe; the cosmic journey, indigenous spirituality, permaculture, worm farming, Waste management, the Great story of the universe, creation spirituality, organic gardening, Ecological economics and missionary work in relations to ecology.

A second module was on "Project Writing" that was facilitated by Mr Ashley Bulgarelli from Australia Marist Solidarity. The Brothers learnt some significant skills relating to starting a ministry project.

At present the Brothers are undergoing a workshop on 'Coaching Skills'. This module is facilitated by a senior lecturer of the Auckland University of Technology (New Zealand) with a local teacher and Marist Brothers. Participating in this module are youth from our nearby parishes as well as teachers from a public Elementary school as well as a small convent Elementary school run by the Passionist sisters. This module focus on developing coaching skills that are related to promoting participation, fun, inclusiveness, equality and respect for each other. These values or characteristics are very much in line with St Marcellin's pedagogy philosophy that in order to teach a child, one must love him ... love them all equally.



NEWS IN BRIEF

ITALY

The communications office of the General House has published a new video on the Lavalla200> Community of Syracuse. The video, available at <https://bit.ly/2JqVX-HQ>, includes interviews with three of its four members, who work to help integrate immigrants into the Italian society. To read the latest news of the community, visit <https://bit.ly/2miAXdc>.

Fiji

On June 29, students of the Marist Brothers High School and staff painted the graveyards of early missionaries who are buried in Tokou Village in the island of Levuka. They are Father Joannes Baptista Breheret (Marist Priest) and Brother Sorlinus Gente (Marist Brother).

COLOMBIA

Coordinators of Marist fraternities and lay groups gathered in Cali from June 8 – 10. The meeting brought together 22 coordinators of lay groups and Marist fraternities, the 14 lay people who made a public charismatic commitment last December and who were accompanied by the presence of Brothers Julio Quintero, Javier Echeverry and the brothers of the Community of Cali.

COMPOSTELA

One hundred and ten new educators from all the centres of the province incorporated in the last three years have taken part in formation courses on Marist identity, personal integration and catechism. They met in Tui, Santiago de Compostela and Burgos, from July 1 – 4. Accompanied by other Marist educators, they were offered small tools of personal self-knowledge and emotional management, and the opportunity to reflect on the religious experience in Marist centers.

THE 17 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

FIRST INTER-AMERICAN ENCOUNTER OF ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH ON THE SDGs



Sixty-three Marist children and youth met simultaneously in Brasilia, Brazil, and Querétaro, Mexico, on June 8 and 9 to find ways to promote the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

The goals (<https://bit.ly/1oIvAOf>) include ending poverty and hunger, promoting gender equality, reducing inequalities and climate action.

The 'Inter-American Encounter of Children, Adolescents and Youth on the Sustainable Development Goals' gave continuity to the process promoted by the Red Corazón Solidario Marista and the Marist International Solidarity Foundation (FMSI), to promote the protagonism of children and youth for the fulfillment of the SDGs in the Americas.

During the two days, Marist children and young people, and in the case of Mexico, also from Save The Children and Aldeas Infantiles, reflected on the objectives of the UN, learned about international mechanisms to monitor the progress of this agenda and generated proposals for action.

As a result of the meeting and through the virtual exchange between both countries, a declaration was generated in which they decided the highest priority objectives and proposals of action of the young people, as well as recommendations to the govern-

ments and civil society.

The main contributions of the declaration were shared by three young people from Mexico in a side event, 'Promoting safe and inclusive communities for children'. It was carried out by the organisations that make up the Movimiento

Mundial por la Infancia en América Latina y el Caribe (World Movement for Children in Latin America and the Caribbean), within the framework of the Foro Político de Alto Nivel por el Desarrollo Sostenible 2018

(High Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development 2018).

In the coming months, in Brazil and Mexico, and in alliance with other organisations and dependencies, they will continue to accompany the action proposals generated by the young people during the meeting held in June.

There was support from: Colegio Marista Champagnat de Taguatinga – Brasilia; Colegio Marista de Brasilia – Brasilia; Colegio Marista Juan Pablo II – Brasilia; Colegio Marista Santa María – Curitiba; Centro Educacional Marista Hermano Eunice Benato – Curitiba; Colegio Marista Hermano Jaime Bizazus; Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Francisco de Vitoria; Organización y Acción Comunitaria Altépetl.

Resources:

To know more about the declaration, click on the following link: <https://www.dropbox.com>

To learn more about the Marist process of child participation promoted in the Americas regarding the SDGs click on:

<https://www.dropbox.com>

MARIST WORLD



J. Coode, of Catholic Nonviolence Initiative, meets with the Secretariat of Mission and FMSI



Madagascar
Meeting of Lay Marists in Antananarivo



Mexico: Young people for the Service - México Central



Hungary
Saint Paul Marist School Karcag



Bangladesh: New group of volunteers from SED (Spain) - Moulvibazar



Lebanon: Socio-educational course for children and families - Fratelli Project, Rmeileh

USA: "OPEN YOUR HEART TO A NEW BEGINNING"

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY LAVALLA200> IN EAST HARLEM



We are an inter-cultural Fraternity formed by Laity and Brothers, having the clear intention of being a significant presence. We are present in East Harlem sharing life and mission. In the present community we are: Br. Luis Vega who participated in the first program of formation of the program LaValla200>, in 2016, and Br. James McKnight and Martha Eugenia

Martinez, of the second program, in 2017. In October 2017 with the complete community, we have begun the New Beginning, a path of mutual knowledge and of growth. Challenges have not made themselves wait for, during the first six months we have dedicated ourselves to learn English, but we have also learnt to dream together, to imag-

ine a Marist group of young people, a fraternity and a School for adults...

We have felt guided by the Spirit and we learn to live our richness and our weaknesses.

Our organization as a community is very simple: by turns we animate the prayer, we cook; each one carries on some tasks in the mission and in the organization of our house. We respect differences and we have personal and community spaces.

Presence among Latin migrants

It has not been easy to discern what the Lord wanted from our presence here and to know to which needs we wanted to respond. In this zone of Harlem there are many institutions which work with Latin migrants. We decided to approach other institutions and Parishes to learn from their experience and to know reality from a different perspective.

We are known as Community Juan Diego. This is a project which the Diocese of New York has entrusted to the Marists in East Harlem and now it is up to us to give it faces and names and make this Project something new, to be the merciful face of the Lord.

The objective of the Project Community Juan Diego is to offer a secure and welcoming environment for all persons who desire to strengthen their life of Faith and of Values. This project is directed especially to the Latin migrants who live in New York and through encounters we help them to consolidate a family spirit. This is the spirit which we have been living in the community for over a year.

We take inspiration from the Virgin of Guadalupe, and just like at one time, Juan Diego before her, his Mother, felt welcomed, accepted in her arms, knowing that he was loved, in the community we receive with open doors and open arms all those who arrive here.

Home of light and of hope in New York

Anybody, like me could ask: "On this Great Block a Mission?" Yes, here also we are walking with the people, and with the children and young people who are the marginalized of life.

We Marists support this Project in East Harlem, stressing the growth in spirituality and the accompaniment in the development of skills and qualifications at any stage in life: boys and girls, young people and adults with their families are invited today to integrate the Community Juan Diego. Our dream is to offer them a simple and warm spirit in this large city of New York, where everybody, all, men and women, but especially where the women can feel welcomed with their partner and children. It is through the global family spirit, simplicity, the presence and closeness that we intend being, a home of light and of hope.

We want to share with you what we are doing to respond to the emerging needs in New York.

Every encounter in the Marist House and in the Project Community Juan Diego is an occasion to grow in spirituality. Every Friday we celebrate Faith in community, and then we share a cup of coffee, which becomes a special



time to share life. The Latin traditions are marked by feasts, and together we celebrate the more important ones for our cultures. We create moments to feel that we are listened to.

We have participated with young people from East Harlem during two consecutive years in the Marist Youth Encounter. With this experience we got the idea to open a space, a place for the formation of leaders, where the young people will have the opportunity to grow in community by means of the Marist charism. The group is formed by young people from different schools and Parishes.

One day a lady told me: "Will you make me a power-point for the feast of my daughter?" And in this way a group was formed of persons interested in having computer courses. We also teach this useful tool so that one day they can obtain a better employment, Step by step, every week twelve children and adolescents meet in the Marist House. It is a magic, amusing time; they come to learn to play the guitar. The majority of them are the children of the ladies who come every Friday to the community prayer.

A completely new Project which we hope will come to light in September 2018, is literacy, to teach people to read and write, with a Primary and Secondary School, with the support from the Mexican Consulate and of the National Institute for the Education of

Adults. We will open a Community Place for the persons who desire to begin and for those who want to finish their last school stage. It is a free of charge service for all inhabitants of Hispanic nationality.

The English classes are a tool which we offer so that their integration in the life of the city will be more complete. We count with a Team of volunteer teachers.

We also collaborate in two close-by Parishes, accompanying the Hispanic catechumens. Every week a group of ladies comes to our House to deepen the Word of God. We also collaborate with Caritas which promotes handicrafts, hand crafts, and the formation of a group of ladies.

An emerging situation is the one lived by the children separated from their mothers. There are three places that keep these children waiting to be united again with their mothers. One of us will have the opportunity to represent the Marists as a volunteer in a house which receives these children in New York.

As you can see, our mission is getting its face and we are grateful to all those persons who have trusted us and have accepted us. The bonds of friendship do not keep us waiting. Now, with great illusion we are waiting for the two new members who have been sent to East Harlem. I am sure that together we will continue to build bridges.

LETTER FROM ALEPPO No 33

THE FORGOTTEN SYRIA

The news from Syria has been side-lined. The transfer of the American embassy to Jerusalem, the tragedy of the immigrants, the elections in some European countries, the Trump-Kim-Jong-Un, and the FIFA world cup have been the only topics in newspapers and media headlines since our last letter.

Meanwhile, the situation in Syria continues to be very worrying and potentially explosive. The interventions or the presence of certain countries on the ground make the situation very complex, and the future uncertain, compromise the negotiations and increase the risk of a regional conflagration. The United States with two military bases and France (illegally established on the territory of a sovereign country) are present in the north-east to support the Kurdish forces that occupy a large part of the territory. On the other hand, Turkey invaded at the end of January, the northwest of Syria to chase out the Kurdish armed groups and is now occupying all the region of Afrin. Finally, Israel launches air raids on the Syrian territory with impunity and supports the jihadists in southern Syria. The Syrian government just launched an offensive to chase out the last rebel armed groups from southern Syria, from the region of Dara'a.

Following the Turkish invasion in the region of Afrin, 27,000 families consistent of 137,000 people fled their towns and villages. They didn't take anything with them except the clothes they were wearing. They lost everything: their house, their tractor, their cattle, their car...They settled in 11 villages and many tent camps including, "Camp Shahba", around the little town of Tel-Rifaat 25 km of Aleppo. We, the Blues Marists, could not remain indifferent to the suffering of those newly displaced people; we heard their call for help (wasn't our group called "the Ear of God" before we became the Blue Marists?).

After a period of hesitation and reflection, fearing for the life of our volunteers, the Turkish forces being at 4-5 Km from Tel-Rifaat, we decided to act...to go meet them...to try to provide for their needs... to take care of their children who don't go to school...to become supportive of these families. And this is how "Camp Shahba" project and adventure started.

New mission in the village of Kafar Nasseh

With the collaboration of the Syrian Red Crescent, we took care of 650 families of the village of Kafar Nasseh and especially Camp Shahba: a camp of 107 tents for 107 families, located in a desert plane.

Four hundred and fifty kids who look forward with a lot of joy to our Wednesday and Sunday visits, who are watching for us at the camp entrance and who gather around us in 2 minutes; and our volunteers who make them play with



a ball, draw and colour, dance, who introduce them to hygiene and teach them the basics of writing and math. One hundred and ten mothers or grandmothers have become the friends of our volunteer ladies and gather to listen, share and give them advices.

One hundred and seven families who are waiting for us to get food and hygiene packages, portable gas stoves for cooking, thermos to keep the drinking water, tablets to sterilize water, slippers, clothes...

Everything is done outdoor, under a blazing sun, with temperature reaching 38-40 Celsius degrees in the shade. We have just installed a big tent, which serves as a covered playground, to at least organize the meetings with the children and women in the shade.

We go there at least twice a week; a drive of an 1h 30m, multiple checkpoints to cross; the 15-20 volunteers are waited for each visit with the smile and the joy, a lot of gratitude and expectations. The displaced are desperate, want to go back home or to Aleppo but the two options are interdicted.

The situation in Aleppo

In Aleppo, the security situation was very good since the evacuation of the armed groups and the liberation of Aleppo from Al Nosra terrorists.

However, bombs fired by rebels in the west of Aleppo continue to fall daily on certain surrounding neighbourhoods. On June 27th, we lived the worst day in the past 18 months: many bombs fell on Aleppo, on residential neighbourhoods, causing many dead and wounded. Shrapnel even reached our premises. One of our volunteer was nearly killed.

The daily life is gradually improving with the restoration of water and electricity, although rationed, and the availability on the market of goods and products. To the contrary, the economic situation is at its lowest; the unemployment rate is very high, the cost of living is very expensive, the salaries are very low and will not allow a family to live with dignity and the Aleppines who have the means to invest and had fled the country, did not come back. Most of the family in Aleppo still need help to live and survive.

The Blues Marists

We, the Blues Marists, have maintained the distribution of food and hygiene baskets to the families we take care of, but we think that after 6 years of help, these distributions will need to stop one day. We believe that the top priority is to find a job for every person being helped. By working, each person can take care of himself or herself; to be, finally, independent from the aid received for years; to live with dignity from his/her work and to stop thinking about leaving the country.

This is how we created our program "The Micro projects". We already have organized 7 training sessions for 16 to 20 adults per session. Experts teach them in 48 hours "how to create your own project". At the end of the sessions, the candidates present their projects to the jury who evaluate them, provide the necessary advice and choose the best projects in terms of feasibility, profitability and sustainability to be financed by us. Since a year and a half, we have already funded 50 projects and allowed more than 90 families to live off their jobs.

Our project "Heart Made" where women transform old-fashioned clothes into unique pieces that are very much appreciated, which gives work to 11 mothers.

Our other project "Marie" for the production of cotton baby clothes supports 24 families.

The Letters of Aleppo

We announced in our last newsletter the forthcoming publication of our "The Letters of Aleppo". This is a collection of all our letters written since the beginning of the war by brother Georges and I, enriched with extracts from interviews, press articles and texts written by either one of us. Our book was finally published by the editing house "Harmattan". You can buy it or order it in bookstores or online at the FNAC, Amazon or Harmattan websites. We encourage you to buy it, read it or offer it; we wish that our testimony will reach as many people as possible; the newspaper "La Croix" has just selected it among 4 books

about the Middle East that one must read this summer (La Croix, supplement on Thursday, June 28th).

All our projects continue thanks to your solidarity and your donations.

The help in lodging the displaced families, the distribution of the food and hygiene baskets, the monthly distribution of milk to 3000 infants and kids under the age of 11...and especially our medical project which, with the project "Camp Shahba" and the "Micro projects" program, mentioned earlier, is one of the 3 priority projects of the Blue Marists. Yes, people need financial support with their medical care, surgeries and our duty is to help them.

As for our educational projects, few are on their summer break as "Learn to Grow" and "I want to Learn" for the children from 3 to 7 years old. The "MIT" (for adult education), "Skill school" for the accompaniment of the teenagers, "the eradication of illiteracy", the teaching of sewing "Cut and Sew" and languages (project hope) continue their educational missions.

We have just completed a cycle of 4 months' sessions for "the development of the woman". 80 women over the age of 30 and 80 under the age of 30 benefited from it. After a break in July and August, we hope that the session will resume with other beneficiaries. Meanwhile, we are organizing training and support meetings for girls who are between 12 and 15 years old.

This is, in brief, our news. We are pursuing our mission that consists of "living the solidarity with the poorest to alleviate suffering, develop the human and sow hope".

I hope that this "Letter from Aleppo No 33" will find you, dear friends, in good health and I wish you a good summer vacation.



BRAZIL: THIRD ASSEMBLY OF AMÉRICA SUR

From July 3 – 6, the third assembly of the América Sur region was held in Porto Alegre, Brazil. Around 50 representatives from the five provinces that make up the region participated. Brothers Luis Carlos Gutiérrez, vicar general, as well as Sylvain Ramandimbarisoa and Óscar Martín Vicario, general councillors, took part on behalf of the general government. The members of the Lavalla200> community of Tabatinga also participated.

"The Assembly was a time to build the 'culture of the encounter' and 'bridges', in line with the General Chapter: dialogue, closeness, good relations and collaboration among the five provinces of Améric Sur," affirmed Br Óscar. "All this within the framework of a regional strategic plan that is growing well, although with at a different pace in some areas, so it will be necessary to continue monitoring and building."

The initial reception was made by the provincial of Cruz del Sur who is also the region's reference provincial, Brother Alberto Aparicio. Next, Brother Natalino de Souza, executive secretary of the region, addressed the points that have already been sorted out since the region's creation

and suggested a reflection thinking of action verbs for the region's path. The suggested words as guides for the next steps were to dare, to boost, to revitalise, to land, to participate and to advance.

The assembly began its preparations with several meetings of the Committee, which aimed at evaluating the progress of the nine proposals, finalising the strategic plan, approving new opportunities and organising the assembly.

During the assembly, the members resumed the projects and discussed the structure and functioning of the region, in line with the general government, until 2025.



WITH PASSION: ASSEMBLY OF THE MISSION OF THE IBÉRICA PROVINCE

The assembly of the mission of the Ibérica province was held from July 2 – 5 in Lardero, Spain. It counted with the participation of about 100 brothers and lay people who work in the province as directors, volunteers and animators. Brothers Ben Consigli, general councillor, and Carlos Alberto Rojas, director of the Secretariat of Mission took part on behalf of the

general administration.

Each of the three days had its own dynamic. The first day aimed at looking at the reality through the eyes of poor children, trying to observe the different faces of poverty: immigrants, the third and the fourth world, spiritual poverty...

During the second day, reality was analysed with the heart, with the tenderness that springs from a generous heart.

On the third day, the participants – who were focused on the topic of mission – sought, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to intuit what is to come and what they believe may be the future of their lives and mission in a world that does not coincide with that of Champagnat.

In his message at the end of

the assembly, Brother Ben Consigli, general councillor, stressed four elements and invited the Ibérica province to continue promoting: the culture of encounter, the global family, the formation of young people and presence. Finally, he stressed the importance of promoting the Marist vocation, whether as a lay or as a religious Marist, and underscored that "we need Marist lay and we need Marist Brothers."

The Ibérica province will hold its chapter this December. It will be the appropriate occasion to make decisions that concretise the wishes and desires of those who spoke in the assembly.

The chronicles of each day are available in detail in the province's website (<http://www.maristasiberica.es>), in addition to videos that narrate the activities that took place in Lardero.



Institute of the Marist Brothers - General House

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